



Typical of Newark's Third Ward is Spruce Street: slummy, with street corner idlers who can't find jobs.

THIRD WARD: NEWARK

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ROTTEN politics have always ruled Newark. From the prohibition era when the Capone-affiliated Third Ward Mob, operating on a large scale in the seclusion of the Hudson's west bank, called the signals for Newark's tin-horn, this city has been a graft-ridden poker board in which the dominant party exploits it to the hilt. Naturally, the worst victims of this exploitation have been the Negroes who live in Newark's Black Belt—the Third Ward and the Neck. Once the main Jewish residential area, the Third Ward now has been almost entirely vacated for its Negro dwellers. A few white families live on the fringes—on Charlton and High Streets. But more than 30,000 of Newark's war-swollen Negro population now live in a site which was never meant to accommodate more than half that number. Negroes live here in conditions worse than Harlem's East side, than Chicago's South side or Detroit's Paradise Valley. Slums—garbage—broken lives and blasted hopes, indifference and downright callousness—vice—crime. This is it.

But this is not a condition into which Negroes have brought themselves. It is a condition



City Hall: politicians' meal ticket.

Newark politics has Negroes hog-tied. That's the fate of many other Negro-filled cities. How can Negroes fight their way out?

into which they have been forced by a tough brand of politics.

Because of the so-called non-partisan City Commission type of government instituted by the Walsh Act in 1917, Newark's elections are a free-for-all in which the live top vote-getters rule the city for four years.

This tends to create individual political machines which, depending on their pocket books, can cross party lines, hand out graft and push the tax-payer around as they like. And since the Negro has neither the money to back political machines nor consolidated voting force, he has been made the scapegoat of this political formula. On one of the few occasions when a Negro ran for Commissioner he had a campaign fund of forty dollars and forty-five cents. One of his white opponents had \$150,000.

The tendency is to vote in racial blocks. But in a city of half a million in which Negroes are the smallest minority, the Negro vote (10,000) by itself has not been able to put a candidate in office. Other blacks are represented. The present commission has three Irishmen, a Jew and an Italian.

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Negro politicians carry the ball for white party lines without

POLITICALLY the fate of Newark's Negroes is the fate of Negroes in any medium sized American city with a colored population of 50,000. The system of exploitation is the same. It's done through old-line Negro politicians who call themselves leaders. In reality they are out to make a smart living stooging for white bosses, greedy for the marginal Negro vote. Acting behind the scenes with a Negro go-between these white politicians promise plenty but give nothing after the Negro vote has helped place them in power.

In the end the only person who benefits is the so-called "leader" who gets a cheap political job at the expense of his people.

For a long time the racketeers in Newark made sure Negroes had no say in politics. In the early thirties race hate hit a new high with Bill Eagan's "Back to the South" movement which aimed at "sending all Negroes where they came from." An alliance of Negro churches and other organizations killed the movement. In the vanguard of the fight were Mercer Burrell and Prosper Brewer, Burrell who was a

member of the State Assembly for two terms now keeps behind the scenes in local politics preferring to cash in as counsel for the National Beauty Culturists' League and the perennial-winning Newark Eagles. Brewer graduated from the guiding reins of the Young People's Welfare Organization to become the first Negro Republican Ward Chairman seven years ago. A barefoot, Georgia farm-boy, he came to Newark at sixteen. In ten years he opened a restaurant in Horner street's red light district, making a monthly turnover of \$2,000.



Mayor Vincent Murphy, busy pleasing Irish majority, has no special plans for Negroes

Rev. William Hayes is only Negro on Housing Authority which is stymied by lack of funds.



Prosper Brewer fought his way to Republican Ward Chairmanship.

Commissioner of Public Affairs John Brady talks things over with his "man of business" in Third Ward, Jim Fultz and Jim's daughter.



Shrewdest of Newark's politicians, Mercer Burrell had two terms in State Assembly, decided it better to be "man behind the throne."



Improving Negro cause, are caught in tough political machines.

Fired by mingling Negro spirit in 1932, he tried to get Negroes into district leadership, succeeded in getting himself elected. He backed both of Roger Yancey's unsuccessful attempts to get on the City Commission in 1933 and 1937, first tries by a Negro to get into City Hall. Yancey was badly beaten and promptly kicked out of city politics. But Brewer, despite educational limitations, decided to become ward chairman and back the tough Franklin-Bernhaut machine. Several times white gangsters tried to waylay him. His de-

feat of Sam Bernhaut (then Corporation Counsel) was a surprise to both whites and Negroes. His narrow win broadened with each new election. Today Brewer's influence is a potent thing. He loudly claims credit for getting Oliver Randolph into the State Attorney General's office at Trenton and for managing Governor Driscoll's successful campaign in Essex County. His lack of book learning has made Brewer the butt of criticism for most of Newark's Negro "gentry". This year Brewer has thumbs down on his former protégé, Dr.

James Otto Hill, only Negro in the State Assembly. Instead, Brewer is grooming brilliant, young Amherst and Rutgers lawyer, James A. Curtis for the job. One reason is Hill, who sponsored the State FEPC bill, has hoisted the traces and formed his own surety for staying in the Assembly—the Essex County Colored Republican Council which includes the Reverend William Hayes, Dr. Cole and other Negro big-wigs. With a potential membership of 1,000 Hill can then command a large segment of the Negro vote and say "the hell with Brewer."



Roger Yancey's attempt at City Commissioner post woke Negroes to leadership. New Asst. U. S. District Attorney, he's quit politics.



Smooth Harold Lett is chief assistant to director of Division Against Discrimination.

Dr. Otto Hill is only Negro in N. J. State Assembly, plans to slay deep-seated opposition.



This is the man Prosper Brewer [rt.] is grooming for State Assembly job, James Curtis, 37-year old counselor and former NAACP president.



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Alma Plater, beautician, was born and has lived in Newark all her life. She has her own shop but cannot credit politicians for getting her a thing in her hand, uphill fight for existence. "Politicians, they stink."



A former cop until he was fired two years ago, Lewis E. Williams, thinks Negro politicians are doing the best with the material they have. He himself is angling for a \$2,600 job as a street inspector for city.



Before Beatrice Davis became a waitress at the "Owl Club" where her husband lost the food concession, she was a typical at the ODB. She says: "Politics have done nothing for us. We still have no jobs, no houses."

Politics have given Negroes nothing; not even politicians benefit;

TO equalize things the Democrats too elected a Negro Third Ward "Chairman" Charley Matthews was only 38 when he took over the ward at the retirement of Manzie Milman three years ago. Bitterly opposed by the old guard because his immaturity and his refusal to join the rackets, he soon found out that politics had more in it than meets the eye. In the 1945 elections he backed a partly attempt to railroad an all-Irish ticket through, and backed Meyer C. Ellenstein, a Jew, because "one minority should stand by another." Actually Ellenstein had been already mayor for two terms but had

gotten mixed up in the "Meadows" land scandal which landed him in court with all the other commissioners. It is really this ~~scandal~~ fingers in some of Newark's choicest pots. Ellenstein has made token appointments to Negroes (water service inspectors) but is not substantially a fighter for Negro rights. However, some of the Negro vote helped get him back in the Commissioner of Public Works chair, thanks to Matthews.

Politics have not brought either the Negro politicians or the people of the Third Ward any gains. There isn't a single Negro politician



Bill Furey is a staunch member of the 52-28 Club. Before he joined Marines he helped his undertaker father. "There's no employment for Negroes. Laziness? There are no Negro leaders. They're all trying to get something."



"Maybe I'm lucky," says Reuben Floyd who gets \$65 a week as a cook in a big restaurant. "But it's terrible around here, just the same. I live on E. 8th St. in an Italian section. All Negroes there will be evicted in a few days."



Michael Fawcett is \$65-a-week cook, mother needs box in spare time. "Mister," she says. "they done forget this part of town. Business goes here every other day, I guess. I gotta take a cab when I'm in a hurry. I don't even vote."



"I don't know much about politics," says Theodore Miller, of the Negro-owned Green Cab fleet. "They make us pay plenty of taxes, but we get some benefits. I don't care as long as I get my 15 or 20 fares a day."



"We are very dissatisfied with conditions," says Annie Foindestet, hairdresser. "Why they used to collect garbage only once a week. The bus system is decrepit and Negroes have no jobs. For 7 whites they hire 1 Negro."



Eddis Dowell, a lightweight, who once went the distance with Bobby Ruffin, says: "Conditions couldn't be worse. No work, no place to live. You don't even get heat in homes. Politicians promise plenty. Give nothing."

Negroes are promised jobs, housing, better schools — never get them.

who has a city job paying above \$3,000 a year. There are few with even that. Charlie Matthews has a \$25-a-week clerkship in Kilenstein's office. There it stops. Primmer Brewer is an investigator in the County Prosecutor's office at \$2600 a year. William R. Jackson is on the Board of Education. The Reverend William Hayes is on the Housing Authority, an unsalaried job. Despite all the interference Negro "leaders" have run for white politicians, the white boys still keep the ball. Individually or collectively there has been no payoff for Negroes.

In a city which boasts that in the percentage of working population

engaged in manufacture it surpasses Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Chicago and New York, Negroes, with no jobs to go to, are holding hands all day on Third Ward street corners. In the face of a toothless FPC law, plants like American Transformer Co. and Jewel Lamp openly practice discrimination. Fidelity Products employ no Negro women in spite of the fact that 70 per cent of their plant personnel is female. And Mosroe Calculating Machine Co. and Tanager Lamp Co. were only recently forced to change their policy of not employing Negroes at all when the plant was organized by the CIO.



Clifford Beckin came to Newark during the war, used to make \$1.20 an hour in shipyards. Now he makes 81 cents at a warehouse laborer. "I am so fed up, ma, my wife and four kids are packing up for Chicago next week."



"A wife and six kids to support is no mean joke," says Eliseus Jones, "and I'm out of a job. This year I've only worked 1 week. There is no child welfare or recreation center. The YMCA looks like a barn. It's bad."



Apart from being a cute girl who looks much younger than her 22 years, Yvonne Waters is one of Newark's 3 women taxi drivers. She's been driving 2½ yrs. and loves it. "The point is," she says, "Negroes won't pull together."

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On Broome Street houses don't have to be torn down. They fall apart. That's where the Croom family (11) live in four rooms of a cold water fourth floor walk-up. Mr. Croom goes to Elizabeth daily to earn \$40 a week in Phelps Copper plant. Says Mrs. Croom: "I don't have to explain. Rat holes . . . dirty walls . . . broken down fire-escapes . . ."

Theo Hayes keeps house for her husband who is a wholesaler in the Farmers' Market. Originally from Chattanooga, Tenn., Theo has no liking for Newark's Third Ward. Every week she goes to the community laundry, meets other women, discusses the same things . . . "Spiraling food cost . . . poor garbage disposal . . . slowness of the 5 Kinney Bus."



"Vice is setting up the Third Ward," says Nathaniel Cornfield. As janitor in three different buildings on block he gets \$65 a month. "The numbers racket and politicians are robbing Negroes here. I always vote Republican but they never did anything for me. The white cops beat you, nothing's done about it. We're just dunks for whites."

Arthur Gilmore is one of two Negroes on Greater Newark Executive Board (CIO), has been Chairman of the PAC—3rd Ward area—since '44. Says he: "Negroes have been given a raw deal, that's why we've mapped a program for improving community services this year. Negroes must consolidate vote, get leadership and wake up politically."



NEGROES MUST JOIN POLITICAL FIGHTS

BUT for the PAC which has come out fighting for jobs for Negroes, and small civic groups, the few Negroes who have jobs in Haynes, Bamberger, Kresge and other large department stores wouldn't have them now. Only a minuscule of Negroes have any white collar jobs in City Hall and the City Hospital has accepted Negro nurses only after a terrible struggle. It was only recently that two Negro doctors were admitted to the Hospital's 300-strong staff. For years it had been a political football until it was brought to a showdown by Commissioner John A. Brady, perhaps the only white politician who wishes to give the Negro a square deal. Dr. E. Max McCarroll, the only Negro woman physician in Newark, who was finally admitted with Dr. Clarence Jennifer, had been applying for 16 years.

Negroes crying for leadership

The Third Ward has no child welfare, no recreation centers. Juvenile delinquency is hitting a new high. Last summer, over protests, the city closed all nursery schools. Housing is a sore spot that threatens to burst open any time. The fire traps and drafty, unheated junk boxes have excessive rentals. There are no new low-income projects, and there will be none for some time unless the Wagner-Elender-Taft Bill is passed or the City gets federal aid of some kind. The Third Ward gets the worst type of transportation service — slow, old fashioned jollop buses — too crammed for the heavy traffic. Until garbage nearly caused a polio epidemic, it used to be taken out once a week. Even now the rubbish litters doorsteps. In a police force of 1,100 City Hall is firing it so that there will be a single Negro patrolman and two detectives. Ten Negro cops, taken on a temporary basis, were fired in March. Civil service and medical examinations have been made so tough they could not pass them.

Strong organization is answer

But Newark, and cities like it, can be improved — and will be improved, only when Negroes fully realize their potentialities, and are determined to participate in the civic and political life of their community. Answers received from numerous persons in Newark and other cities have too often proved that Negroes do not give two straws about community participation, do not make politicians live up to promises they make. They let things slide and take whatever is handed them, and in mute protest go out and vote for them again. Some do not even vote.

Newark is crying for leadership — good, sound, honest-to-goodness leadership — by men with the people's interest and not their own at heart. Newark is making no effort to foster that leadership. As Arthur Gilmore, PAC Third Ward Chairman, said: "Negroes are not politically educated. They don't take interest in communal service. They must learn to form strong organizations and back them too — not only with words but with the pennies they throw away in gin mills."

That's what the PAC is trying to do now. That's what Negro organizations should try to do all over the country. Negro politicians too, must stop destroying their cause for party politics.

In the final analysis Republicans and Democrats treat Negro areas the same way. If Negroes get strong enough, organizationally, they can make the politicians do their bidding and serve the needs of Negro communities.



This is what Negroes get back for their votes — filthy jerry-built, postboard fire traps.

So cold inside they prefer to huddle on stoop. Snow and garbage pile on doorsteps.

